



blm - alaska

frontiers

managing public lands for multiple use

Issue 27 ANILCA Special December 1990

Alaska Lands Act 10th Anniversary



They're ready for fun on a river float. The Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (also called ANILCA or the Alaska Lands Act) created six national wild and scenic rivers on land managed by BLM in Alaska.

Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act shapes federal management



BLM began to develop long range goals for recreation resources and opportunities in 1988.

After more than a hundred years of uncertainty over the ultimate disposition of land in the forty-ninth state, the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act (ANILCA) put in place the final building block in the structure of ownership.

Tied with the Alaska Statehood Act (104 million acres to the state), the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act (44 million acres to Natives), and the Federal Land Policy and Management Act (public ownership and multiple use on BLM lands), ANILCA established conservation units of more than 130 million acres.

What this all means is that after the BLM completes the massive and expensive job of transfer of land and title to the State of Alaska and to Alaska Natives, it will have stewardship for more than 70 million acres in this magnificent state.

Ten years after the passage of ANILCA, the major part of BLM's work is still related to survey and conveyance of lands. However, the final pattern of land ownership is beginning to emerge.

As part of its overall national mission of multiple use for public lands, BLM in 1987 began to develop long range goals for fish and wildlife resources, and then in 1988 for recreation resources and opportunities. National plans, called *Fish and Wildlife 2000*, and *Recreation 2000*, were written.

By 1990 BLM plans were also completed for Alaska. These plans set up goals to be achieved by the turn of the century within BLM's fish, wildlife and recreation programs.

Given the importance of these critical resources to urban residents, rural residents, and visitors, their management within a multiple use concept on the 70+ million acres of BLM land is highly significant.

Fish and Wildlife 2000-Alaska sets the overall goal of biological diversity for these lands. This includes completing major resource inventories, maintaining critical habitat for key species, cooperating with other agencies, and encouraging private investment in habitat improvements.

Recreation 2000-Alaska also establishes broad and far-reaching goals, including building campgrounds and visitor contact points, preparing interpretive materials and opportunities, creating trails and others. Under multiple use, recreation is a critical ingredient, and BLM's philosophy and mission encourages people to use and enjoy public lands.

The passage of ANILCA ten years ago did, indeed, set the stage for long term management, and the BLM is now moving forward to firmly establish fish, wildlife and recreation resources as critical and necessary ingredients as part of a multiple use mix. Once fully implemented, these plans will provide major benefit to people, wildlife, and to the land itself.

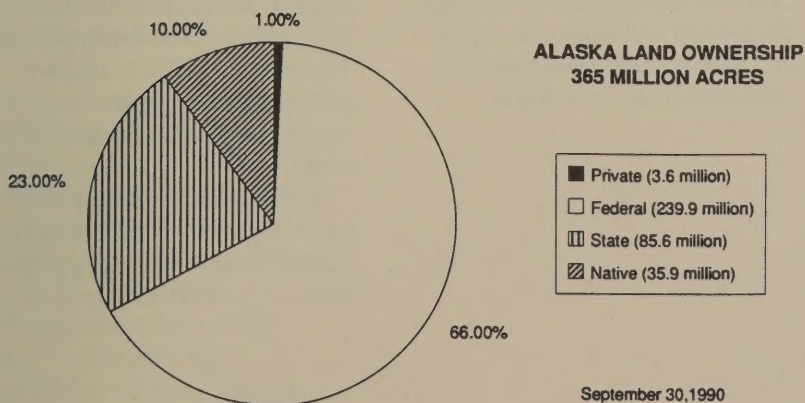
—Dave Vickery

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Lands administered by the Bureau of Land Management in Alaska



This map shows a generalized picture of land areas currently administered by BLM. The conveyance of millions of acres to the State of Alaska and to numerous Alaska Native groups and individuals is expected to continue for many more years. When all conveyances have been completed, BLM expects to be responsible for the administration of approximately 70 million acres.



Outdoor recreation

December 10 is the tenth anniversary of the Antiquities Act (ANILCA). This landmark legislation changed BLM administration patterns in Alaska. And on December 10, 1978, when ANILCA gave the BLM a cluster



Section 401 established the Steese National Conservation Area. This 1.2-million-acre area is found about 70 miles northeast of Fairbanks. The area is divided by the Elliot Highway into a north unit and a south unit. BLM manages the area under principles of multiple use for minerals, recreation, wildlife and other resource values. The Steese area is home for caribou, Dall sheep, bears, wolves, wolverines, furbearers and raptors.

The 26-mile-long Pinnell Mountain National Recreational Trail offers outstanding views of the surrounding countryside and is known for its summer wild flowers and views of the "midnight sun" in June. BLM has constructed and maintains several emergency shelters on this popular trail.

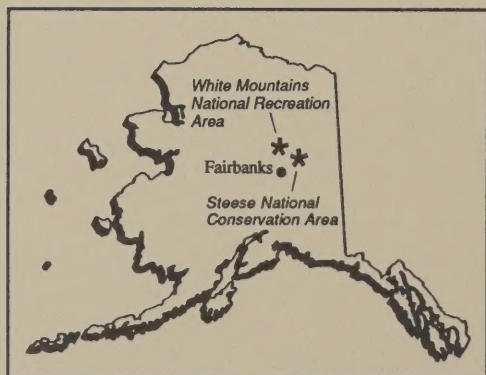
Birch Creek National Wild and Scenic River also flows through the Steese and offers the most convenient way to see remote areas that have few trails.

Section 403 established the White Mountains National Recreation Area. The White Mountains NRA is the only national recreation area managed by BLM. This million-acre area is named for the unusual limestone cliffs of the White Mountains, an area distinctively different from the rest of interior Alaska.

BLM has developed an extensive network of winter trails and cabins that have become increasingly popular with residents and visitors alike. Cabins are on a reservation basis and are generally booked throughout the peak use season of February through early April.

The White Mountains NRA also includes Beaver Creek, one of six National Wild and Scenic rivers managed by BLM in Alaska. BLM is now designing the "Nome Creek Gateway Project" to improve access to Beaver Creek via Nome Creek. The project will also include new road-accessible campgrounds, trails, and picnic areas.

Statistics show that in 1989 approximately 14,000 people visited this increasingly popular area.



on got a boost

Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act dramatically altered the shape of federal land. For enthusiasts received special benefits and new management responsibilities.



Section 603 designated six National Wild and Scenic Rivers under BLM management. These include Beaver and Birch creeks northeast of Fairbanks, the Gulkana and Delta rivers near Paxson, the Unalakleet River in western Alaska and the Fortymile River near the Canadian border. BLM developed river management plans for all six rivers by late 1983. The more popular rivers such as the Delta, Gulkana and Fortymile receive regular river patrol to assist the increasing number of people who float these scenic waters to fish, relax, or experience whitewater travel.

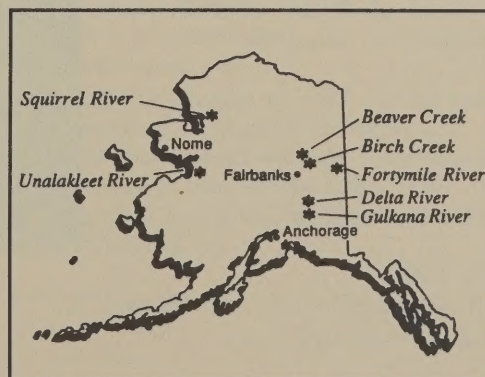
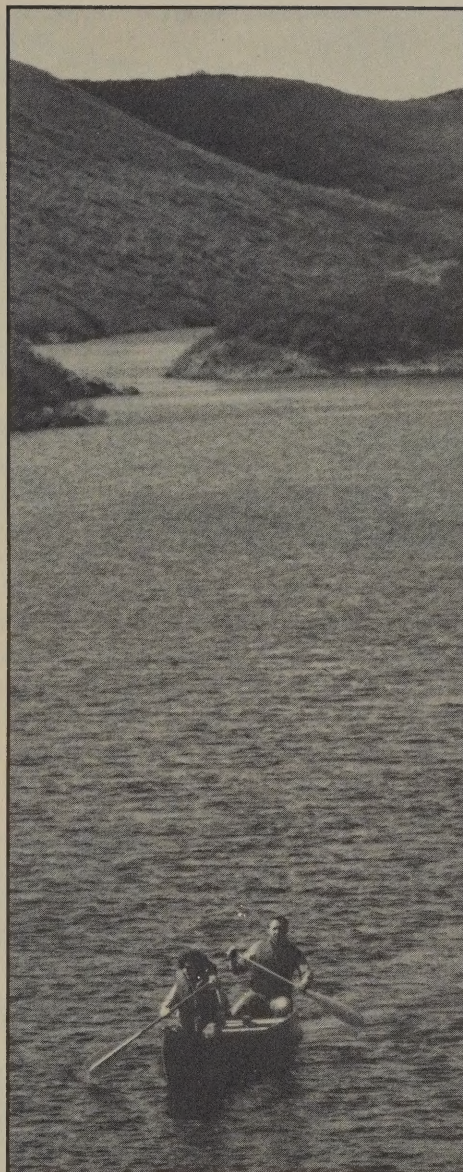
The Gulkana and Delta rivers are somewhat unusual for Alaska in that there is convenient road access at both the put-in and take-out points. Several segments of the Fortymile system have road access as well. The Fortymile eventually joins the Yukon River, allowing extended wilderness trips.

Several BLM campgrounds serve as important staging areas for traveling to and from these waters. Walker Fork, West Fork, Sourdough, Tangle Lakes and Tangle River camping areas have all recently been refurbished as part of BLM's Recreation 2000 program. The Sourdough Campground is undergoing a major expansion with new boat ramps parking and hiking trails.

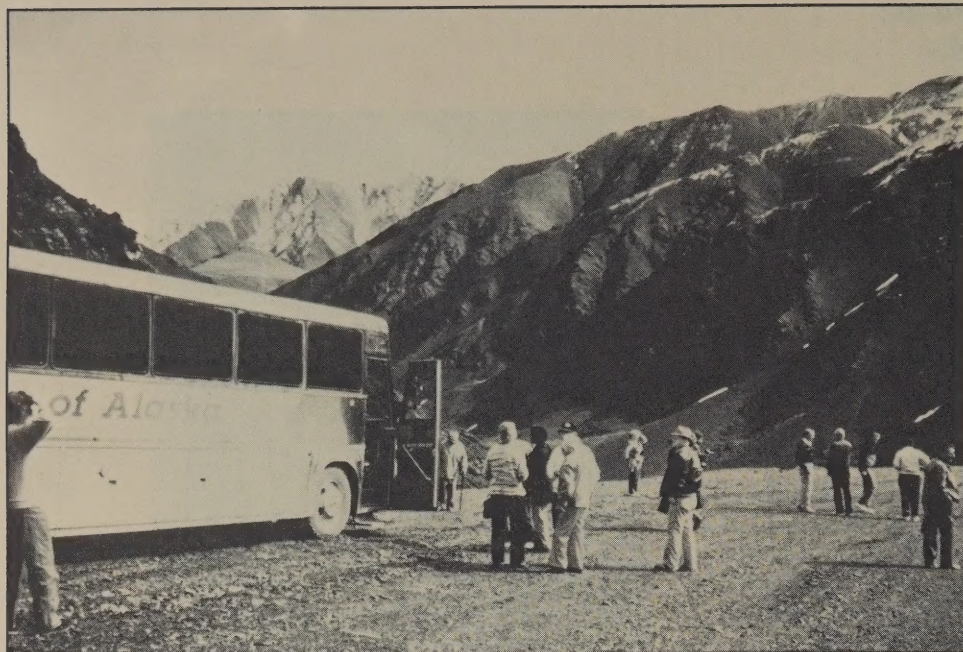
Section 1305 established four Interagency Visitor Centers. Three of these are now open, in Anchorage, Fairbanks and Tok. A fourth is being planned for Ketchikan. The centers provide "one stop shopping" convenience for people seeking recreation information on public lands in Alaska. BLM and other federal and state agencies supply this information. BLM also participates in the inter-agency steering committee for the four centers and provides support for various visitor center projects such as signing, exhibit design, videos and publications.

BLM will continue to publicize the recreation opportunities on public lands in Alaska. Recreationists seeking a quiet alternative will do well to visit some of these areas.

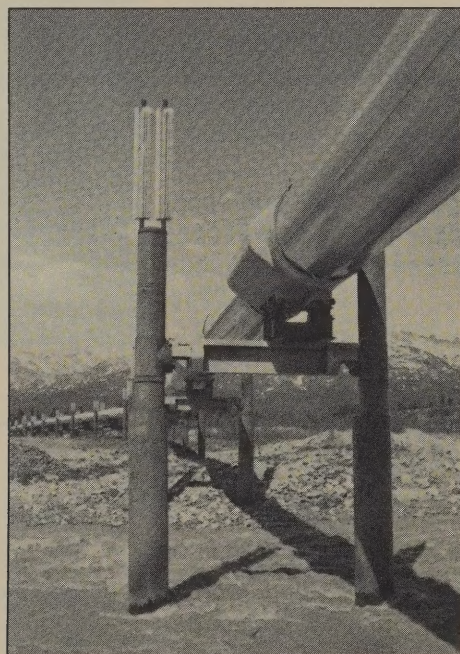
—Ed Bovy



What is multiple use management,



Tourists step off a bus onto the Dalton Highway at Atigun Pass. A good example of multiple use, this road was originally built for construction of the Trans-Alaska Pipeline (below). Now, besides being used for pipeline maintenance and as a supply route to the oil fields at Prudhoe Bay, it has become important for recreation use. Major tour companies provide bus tours for thousands of people each summer, and independent travelers can drive part way up the road to see the arctic scenery.



BLM has been directed by Congress to manage the public lands under principles of multiple use. It sounds simple. Yet no idea vexes either the agency or the public more when it comes time to explain why some activities can take place in a given area while others cannot.

Multiple use simply means that BLM seeks to accommodate all legitimate uses of the public lands—hunting, fishing, traveling by off-road vehicle, oil and gas exploration and development, harvesting timber, providing wildlife habitat, mining—it's all there on the public lands, somewhere.

Everyone can be satisfied when many compatible activities are occurring simultaneously. For example, an area could be grazed by both cattle and wildlife while people are visiting to hunt or fish or just enjoy the outdoors. This is what most people think of when they hear the phrase "multiple use."

But what happens when one use is perceived as being incompatible with another?

In some cases uses that first SEEM incompatible with each other can occur on the same land if they are separated by time. For example, an area could be open to oil exploration in winter when the area is frozen and quiet. Yet the same place would provide food and cover for waterfowl nesting in the summer when the area could be closed to exploration.

In other cases, uses are incompatible with each other. No one wants to walk down a narrow trail knowing they could be run over by a speeding motorcycle. So, multiple use does NOT mean that all uses can or should occur on the same acre at the same time.

At times it is necessary to dedicate a portion of the public lands to a single use or a series of related uses. In some places BLM may give priority to recreational activities to assure a higher quality experience. Other places may be dedicated to

anyway?

mineral extraction because they contain valuable mineral deposits.

In determining the "highest and best use" of an area, BLM must also consider human and social needs.

But even in a seeming worst-case example where a massive mining project would exclude all other uses for the duration of the project, time can soften the conflict. For example, the land could be strip mined for thirty years, then regraded, revegetated and successfully returned to other uses such as wildlife habitat and recreation.

How does BLM determine what happens where? The BLM field managers rely on an area's resource management plan.

These land use plans are developed over a period of several

years with extensive involvement with the general public, particularly those people most likely to be affected by the land use decisions.

Areas of high value for particular resources are identified on a series of maps. A series of general guidelines is put in place to help the manager determine what activities should have priority where. This is why it is very important for people who use public land to participate when plans are being developed.

Plans are updated or rewritten approximately every 10 years to accommodate change.

Managing the public lands under the multiple use concept is often difficult and always challenging. It is much more difficult to seek a balance between many uses than to



An Alaska Native woman uses an ulu, or woman's knife, to prepare fish to be dried. Subsistence activities like hunting and fishing are important uses of public lands.

advocate a single use. BLM managers are dedicated to meeting this challenge, and rely on both the public and their staffs of resource specialists to get the job done.

—Ed Bovy

Dear Reader:

The Federal Land Policy and Management Act of 1976 (FLPMA) and the Alaska National Interest Lands Conservation Act of 1980 (ANILCA) are two significant laws which impact the Bureau of Land Management's planning and management practices on public lands in Alaska. Although it may appear that FLPMA and ANILCA conflict, the fact is that they complement each other.

The BLM received its multiple-use mandate for managing public lands from FLPMA.

When Congress then passed ANILCA, they gave BLM a variety of specific mandates for the public lands in Alaska without changing the basic multiple-use mission.

As a result of ANILCA, BLM in Alaska now manages units of the Wild and Scenic Rivers System, a national recreation area and a national conservation area.

The rivers include the Gulkana National Wild River (181 miles), the Delta National Wild and Scenic River (62 miles), and Unalakleet National Wild River (81 miles), the Beaver National Wild River (111 miles), the Birch Creek National Wild River (126 miles), and the Fortymile National Wild and Scenic River (392 miles). Totalling more than 950 miles, these rivers represent 48 percent of the wild and scenic rivers managed by BLM nationally, and 10 percent of the total national wild and scenic rivers system.

The White Mountains National Recreation Area (one million acres) was BLM's first. It is managed with primary

consideration for recreational opportunities. The Steese National Conservation Area (1.2 million acres) gives priority to caribou habitat and the Birch Creek National Wild River. For both of these units, ANILCA specifically states that they shall be managed in accordance with the planning and management mandates of FLPMA.

Unique to Alaska, ANILCA puts BLM and other federal land managers into the management of fish and wildlife populations to assure that the rural residents of Alaska receive priority for subsistence uses of wild renewable resources. In other words, rural residents receive priority for opportunities to utilize the harvestable portion of fish and wildlife populations before sport or commercial uses. Underlying this is the requirement to assure healthy fish and wildlife populations on the public lands.

ANILCA also requires that any proposed action to withdraw, reserve, lease or otherwise permit the use, occupancy or disposition of public lands must be reviewed for its impact on subsistence uses.

In the ten years since the passage of ANILCA, we have found it to provide specific planning and management direction, but not to be inconsistent with the mandates of FLPMA. We will continue to manage the public lands and resources in a manner that meets the requirements of both these major federal land laws.

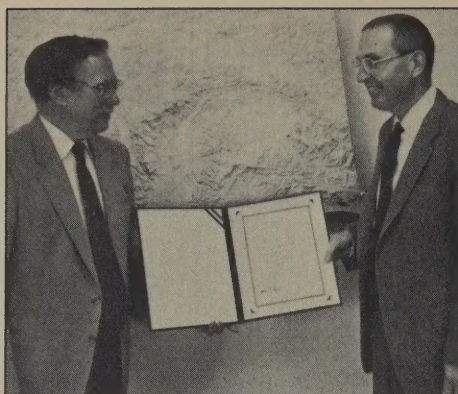
—Bish Buckle
BLM Alaska Deputy State Director for Lands
and Renewable Resources

frontier flashes

The draft environmental impact statement on Echo Bay Exploration Inc.'s proposal to reopen the Alaska-Juneau gold mine in Juneau is expected to be published by the end of January 1991.

Last summer BLM's Alaska division of cadastral survey completed 282 U.S. surveys, covering 550 parcels, as well as 978 miles of boundary survey. A total of 2,001 official monuments were established. To date, about 30 percent of Alaska has been surveyed.

Four Aleut villages received patent from BLM to 365,000 acres of land during the 18th annual meeting of the Aleut Native Corporation. This land represents about 70 percent of the villages' entitlements under the Alaska Native Claims Settlement Act. U.S. patent is the final title, and completes years of cooperative work by BLM, the State of Alaska and the Aleut Corporation in resolving the locations of public easements and other claims.



The State of Alaska presented BLM its prestigious Commendation Award for extraordinary cooperative work with the state during the 1990 fire season. Here BLM State Director Ed Spang and BLM Alaska Fire Service Manager Gene Schloemer show off the award. Wildfires burned more than 3 million acres in Alaska this year.

At the Alaska State Chamber of Commerce annual convention in Fairbanks in October, staff members from BLM's three northern districts staffed a booth, distributed information brochures and answered questions from delegates and business representatives from Japan, China, Taiwan, Russia and all over Alaska.

BLM presented a display about its popular Resource Apprenticeship Program for Students (RAPS) during the Youth Conference of the Alaska Federation of Natives' statewide convention in Anchorage in October. The exhibit gave students information on how to apply for the program and showed photos of students learning about resource jobs. Between 500 and 600 people visited the exhibit, including youth delegates from all over Alaska.

BLM is sending a representative on one of the four teams visiting 60 villages around the state prior to writing an environmental impact statement on subsistence. The teams, headed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, will hear concerns from village residents on topics including rural vs. non-rural determinations, the definition of "customary and traditional," and the environmental, socioeconomic and cultural impacts of subsistence activities.



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